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SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR TAHIR-KHELI DISCUSSES UN REFORM WITH
BAHRAINI OFFICIALS

Classified By: Ambassador William T. Monroe for reasons 1.4(b) and (d).

11. (C) Summary: Senior Advisor to the Secretary of State on UN Reform Ambassador Tahir-Kheli met in separate meetings December 7 with Minister of State for Foreign Affairs and Minister of Information Mohammed Abdul Ghaffar and Ministry of Foreign Affairs Assistant Undersecretary for Political Affairs and International Cooperation Ahmed Al Haddad. The officials expressed GOB support for UN reform, but focused on the need for consensus on reform areas. They also urged UNSC expansion, to include an Islamic or Arab state as a permanent member. Abdul Ghaffar stated clear GOB support for the U.S. position in its against terrorism. End Summary.

12. (C) In separate meetings December 7 with Abdul Ghaffar and Al Haddad, Ambassador Tahir-Kheli urged movement on UN reform, particularly in the area of management. Al Haddad stated that mismanagement of UN funds is not acceptable and that the GOB supports management reform. He expressed appreciation that the U.S., as a major contributor to the UN, is consulting with smaller countries on reform issues.

Hot-Button Issues

13. (C) Officials in both meetings said they were open to UN reform, but stressed the need for consensus on reform areas. Abdul Ghaffar said that reform should reflect the interests of the majority of countries, if not all, and not just big countries. He recognized that complete consensus would be difficult to reach, but that at least most countries now realize that reform is necessary. Ambassador Tahir-Kheli urged that UN members move forward on those reform items on which there is general agreement.

14. (C) Both Bahraini officials focused on the issue of UNSC expansion. Al Haddad expressed the need for an Islamic or Arab country with a permanent seat on the UNSC. Ambassador Tahir-Kheli expressed concern that the issue of UNSC expansion had polarized the UN, affecting UN work in many areas. She explained that the U.S. was not against moderate UNSC expansion, but that the expansion should be approached from a context of effectiveness of the UNSC and comprehensive reform within the UN.

Islam and Terror

15. (C) Ambassador Tahir-Kheli expressed hope that the UN would launch the Peacebuilding Commission and conclude the Comprehensive Convention Against International Terrorism in the next year. She encouraged the GOB to work within the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC) to support these initiatives. Abdul Ghaffar stated that the view of many Arab countries has been that the definition of terrorism should include "state terrorism." He said that the issue of the definitions of "aggression" and "terrorism" have been a problem for a long time. Abdul Ghaffar stated clearly that "We are with you" in the fight against terror. He expressed optimism in the fact that Saudi Arabia has taken a leadership role in the fight against terrorism and has proposed locating a counter-terrorism center in Saudi Arabia. Ambassador Tahir-Kheli reiterated that the Secretary had stated that there could be no exceptions to attacks by terrorists on innocent civilians.

16. (U) Ambassador Tahir-Kheli has cleared this message.

MONROE